## **URS**

# The U.S. DOT Federal Transit Administration and the Connecticut Department of Transportation

In cooperation with
The South Western Regional Planning Agency and
The Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials



Public Meeting
Towns of Wilton, Brookfield, and Bethel
Project No. 302-008

June 15-17, 2010

# **AGENDA**

- Introductions
- Meeting Format
- Presentation of Alternatives
- Evaluation of Alternatives
- Public Comments





## DANBURY BRANCH EIS: MEETING PURPOSE

- To Describe the Alternatives
- To Describe the Evaluation Process and the Results to Date
- To Seek Your Input





# DANBURY BRANCH FTA AA/EIS STUDY

## WHAT IS AN EIS?

- a detailed report describing the potential effects of a project on the environment.
- a requirement of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA).
- An EIS documents the potential positive and negative environmental effects of a proposed action
- An EIS presents alternative courses of action.



This meeting is a part of the NEPA and CEPA Process.

# NATIONAL and CONNECTICUT ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT - (NEPA) and (CEPA) PROCESS

- NEPA Law passed in 1969 and signed into law by President Nixon in 1970
- CEPA approved by CT legislature in 1973
- Considers Potential Environmental Impacts of Any Federal Action (NEPA) and State Action (CEPA)
- This Project also follows US DOT Federal Transit Administration Alternatives Analysis and EIS Guidelines
- Lengthy Timeline
  - Extensive Agency and Public Involvement Process
  - Significant Documentation Effort







## DANBURY BRANCH CORRIDOR MAP

## 3 Segments

### South Norwalk to Danbury

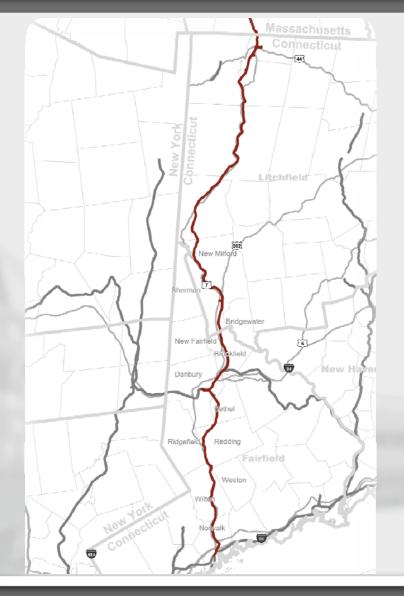
- 23.6 miles
- Existing Passenger Rail Service (Metro North)
- 8 Stations

### Danbury to New Milford

- 14 miles
- Existing Freight (HRRC)
- No Passenger Rail
- 3 Proposed Stations

### New Milford to Pittsfield, MA

- 38 miles to MA State Line
- Existing Freight (HRRC)
- No Passenger Rail





# **DANBURY BRANCH EIS: PROJECT PURPOSE**

- Improve mobility options for the traveling public in the South Western and Housatonic Valley regions of Connecticut
- Maintain and improve existing commuter rail service on the Danbury Branch as well as improve its feeder system and intermodal connections on the Branch



 Help reduce congestion in the Route 7 corridor between South Norwalk and New Milford



\*All alternatives assume CTC project completed

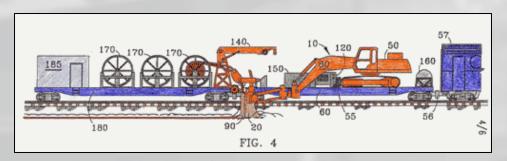
## DANBURY BRANCH CTC PROJECT

### **Project Purpose:**

 To improve safety, reliability, and flexibility of rail service

### **Project Components:**

- Cabling and Power Supply Contract
- Pre-wired Signal Houses procurement
- Related Track Work
- Connections, Testing & Commissioning







## PROJECT SCOPE & WORK COMPLETED TO DATE

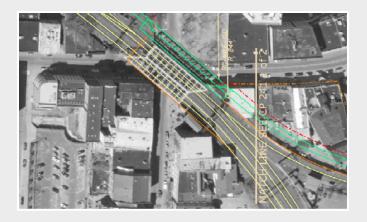
- ✓ Task 1: Kick-Off Meeting (Completed)
- ✓ Task 2: Coordination Meetings (Continuing)
- ✓ Task 3: Scoping Meetings and Scoping Report (June '08)
- ✓ Task 4: Base and Environmental Mapping (Ongoing)
- ✓ Task 5: Environmental Data Collection
  - ✓ 18 Tech Memos, reviewed and approved by regulatory agencies and CTDOT
- ✓ Task 6: Existing Transportation Systems Report
  - ✓ Passenger Surveys
  - ✓ Train Performance Calculations (TPCs)
  - ✓ Data File To Initiate Travel Demand Forecasting
  - ✓ Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Report
- ✓ Task 7: Existing Rail Infrastructure Report
- ✓ Task 8: Draft EIS Outline

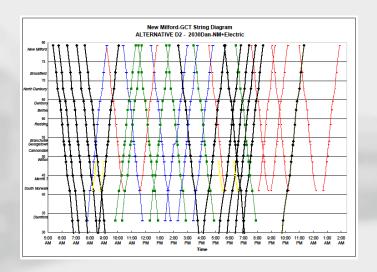


## **CURRENT ACTIVITIES**

## **Significant Ongoing Tasks**

- Pre-DEIS Public Meeting
- Service Plans
- Traction Power Modeling
- Conceptual Engineering
- Impact Evaluations and Draft EIS

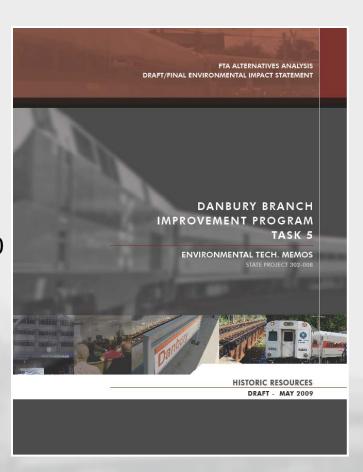






## **DEIS SCHEDULE UPDATE**

- Phase I Meetings Completed
- Coordination Meetings Ongoing
- Public Scoping Meetings Completed June 2008
- Study Advisory Meetings Completed June 2009 & April 2010
- Upcoming Study Advisory Meeting June 2010
- Public Pre-DEIS Meetings June 2010
- Administrative & Agency Review Fall 2010
- Publish DEIS January 2011
- DEIS Public Hearings February 2011





## **ALTERNATIVES UNDER CONSIDERATION**

#### A. No Build Alternative

Existing Rail Service (11 Trains Each Direction)

#### **B. Transportation System Management (TSM)**

Additional Rail Service and Improved Bus Connections

### **C. South Norwalk to Danbury Improvements**

- Track Re-Alignments and Passing Sidings
- Station Enhancements
- Bridge Upgrades
- Electrification, Signal Modifications
- Storage Yard and Facility Upgrades

### D. Extension from Danbury to New Milford

- New Track and Signal System
- New Stations and Storage Yard
- Bridge Upgrades
- Electrification Option

### E. Improvements from South Norwalk to Merritt 7/Wilton

Similar Improvements as C

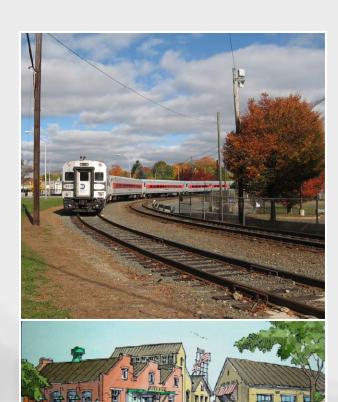
# **ALTERNATIVE A: NO BUILD**

 Maintain Existing Service Between South Norwalk and Danbury

Weekday: 11 Trains

Weekend: 6 Trains

- Assumes Centralized Traffic Control System
- Georgetown Station will be Developed
- Transit Shuttles from South Norwalk to Merritt 7 Area
- Transit Shuttles to Harlem Line





## **ALTERNATIVE A: NO BUILD - IMPACTS**

### **Positive**

- No New Capital Costs
- No New Operating Cost
- No New Environmental Impacts

## **Negative**

- EPA Nonattainment Area
- Increased Roadway Congestion
- Increased Travel Time within the Corridor
- Decreased Travel Time Reliability
- Does Not Encourage Transit Supportive Land Use and Economic Development



# ALTERNATIVE B: TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MANAGEMENT (TSM)

Everything That Can be Done Without New Construction or New Vehicle Procurement

- Additional Rail Shuttle Service South Norwalk to Wilton
  - Two Trains AM, Two Trains PM
- Hourly Mid-day Rail Service to South Norwalk and/or Stamford
- Enhanced Bus and Transit Service
- More Frequent Weekend Rail Service
  - Every Two Hours





## **ALTERNATIVE B: TSM - IMPACTS**

### **Positive**

- No New Capital Costs
- No Natural Resource Impacts
- More Frequent Rail and Transit Services
- Potential Air Quality Improvements
- Fosters Transit Supportive Land Use and Economic Development

### **Negative**

- Increased Operating Costs
- Potential Increase in Noise and Vibration
- Greater Demand for Limited Parking

# ALTERNATIVE C: SOUTH NORWALK TO DANBURY IMPROVEMENTS

- Track Realignments for Operational and Speed Enhancements (Up to 60 mph)
- Station Enhancements Parking and Access Improvements
- Bridge and Structure Upgrades New Ballast Deck Bridges and Retaining Walls
- Electrification System Between South Norwalk and Danbury – New Traction Power System (Catenary and Substations)
- New Rolling Stock Electric Multiple Units (EMUs)
- Danbury Yard and Maintenance Facility Upgrades







# ALTERNATIVE C: SOUTH NORWALK TO DANBURY IMPROVEMENTS - IMPACTS

### **Positive**

- Faster and More Frequent Rail and Transit Services
- Potential Air Quality Improvements
- Fosters Transit Supportive Land Use and Economic Development
- Potential Reduction in Corridor Congestion
- Increased Parking to Meet Demand

### **Negative**

- New Capital Costs
- Increased Operating Costs
- Environmental Impacts (e.g. Natural Resources, Construction, Noise and Vibration)
- Property Acquisition



# ALTERNATIVE D: EXTENSION FROM DANBURY TO NEW MILFORD (DIESEL)

- Construct New Track (speed up to 79 mph) from Danbury to New Milford
- Construct Double Track Between Danbury and Berkshire Junction
- New Stations at Danbury North, Brookfield, and New Milford
- Bridge and Structure Upgrades Convert Existing Open Deck to Ballast Deck Bridges
- New Communication and Signal System
- New Rolling Stock
- New Yard and Maintenance Facility in New Milford







# ALTERNATIVE D: EXTENSION FROM DANBURY TO NEW MILFORD (DIESEL) – IMPACTS

#### **Positive**

- New Rail and Transit Services
- Potential Air Quality Improvements
- Potential Reduction in Corridor Congestion
- Fosters Transit Supportive Land Use and Economic Development
- New Station and Parking Facilities

## **Negative**

- New Capital Costs
- New Operating Costs
- Environmental Impacts (e.g. Natural Resources, Construction, Noise and Vibration, and Cultural Resources)
- Property Acquisition



# ALTERNATIVE D: EXTENSION FROM DANBURY TO NEW MILFORD (ELECTRIC OPTION)



- New Traction Power System
   Between Danbury and New Milford
   (Catenary and Substations)
- New EMU Rolling Stock
- Seven Highway Overpasses to be Raised to Accommodate the Catenary

\*Assumes Alternative D is selected and all improvements previously mentioned for Alternative D are implemented.



# ALTERNATIVE D: EXTENSION FROM DANBURY TO NEW MILFORD (ELECTRIC OPTION) – IMPACTS

#### **Positive**

- Air Quality Improvements
- Reduced Trip Time
- Higher Ridership Forecast
- Lessened Environmental Impacts (e.g. Emissions and Noise)

## **Negative**

- Higher Capital Costs
- Visual Impact Due to Catenary



# ALTERNATIVE E: IMPROVEMENTS FROM SOUTH NORWALK TO MERRITT 7/WILTON

- Track Realignments for Operational and Speed Enhancements
- Parking and Access Improvements at Merritt 7 Station
- Bridge and Structure Upgrades
  - New Ballast Deck Bridges and Retaining Walls
- Electrification System Between South Norwalk and Wilton
  - New Traction Power System (Catenary and Substations)





# ALTERNATIVE E: IMPROVEMENTS FROM SOUTH NORWALK TO MERRITT 7/WILTON – IMPACTS

#### **Positive**

- More Frequent Rail and Transit Services
- Potential Air Quality Improvements
- Fosters Transit Supportive Land Use and Economic Development
- Increased Parking to Meet Demand

## **Negative**

- New Capital Costs
- Increased Operating Costs
- Environmental Impacts (e.g. Natural Resources, Construction, Noise and Vibration)
- Visual Impacts
- Property Acquisition



# **IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE – ALTERNATIVE B**





## **Transportation System Management (TSM)**

- Can be implemented upon completion of the Centralized Train Control (CTC) project
- Expected completion date is Summer 2012



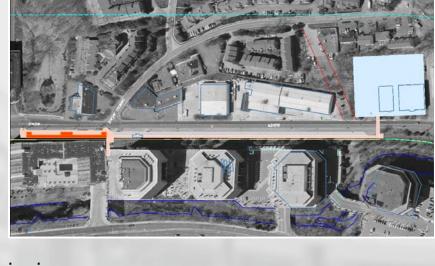
## **IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE – ALTERNATIVE C**

#### **Improvements from South Norwalk to Danbury**

- Track Re-Alignments and Passing Sidings
- Station Enhancements
- Bridge Upgrades
- Electrification

#### **Schedule**

- Fall 2011 Complete EIS & ROD
- 2012 Funding Decision
- 2013 Begin Design
- 2014 Complete Design
- 2015 Permits
- 2016 Funding for Construction
- 2017 Begin Construction
- 2019 Complete Construction
- 2020 Complete Testing and Commissioning
- 2021 Electric Trains in Service



## **IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE - ALTERNATIVE D**

#### **Extension from Danbury to New Milford**

- New Stations and Track Upgrade
- Potential Electrification
- New Maintenance, Shop & Yard

#### **Schedule**

- Fall 2011 Complete EIS and Record of Decision
- 2012 Funding Decision
- 2013 Begin Design
- 2014 Complete Design
- 2015 Permits
- 2016 Funding for Construction
- 2017 Begin Construction
- 2020 Complete Construction
- 2021 Complete Testing and Commissioning
- 2022 New Service Begins





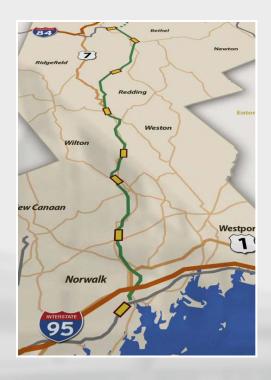
## **IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE - ALTERNATIVE E**

#### **Improvements from South Norwalk to Merritt 7**

- New Stations and Track Upgrade
- Electrification

#### **Schedule**

- Fall 2011 Complete EIS and Record of Decision
- 2012 Funding Decision
- 2013 Begin Design
- 2014 Complete Design
- 2015 Permits
- 2016 Funding for Construction
- 2017 Begin Construction
- 2018 Complete Construction
- 2019 Complete Testing and Commissioning
- 2020 New Service Begins





## **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

- Planned Phasing of Improvements
- Could combine elements of more than one alternative
- Allows for immediate improvements upon completion of EIS process
- Takes advantage of incremental funding



## **BENEFITS OF THE ALTERNATIVES**

- Increased Frequency of Service
- Reduced Trip Times
- Expanded Travel Market



# **OVERALL SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS**

### **Weekday Passenger**

- Service between 5-5:30 AM and 12:00 Midnight
- 1 hour frequency each direction
- ½ hour frequency for AM Inbound and PM Outbound

### **Weekend Passenger**

- Service between 6:00 AM and 1:00 AM
- 2 hour frequency each direction

### Freight

- Between Danbury & Norwalk Continues at night
- North of Danbury

HRRC – Morning and Afternoon round trip to Danbury

P&W – Evenings to Danbury from Derby

# TRIP TIMES

|                                | Existing<br>Schedule                        | Alternative<br>A & B | Alternative<br>C<br>Diesel | Alternative<br>C<br>Electric    | Alternative<br>E<br>Wilton     |
|--------------------------------|---|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Danbury<br>to South<br>Norwalk | 48 - 54 minutes                             | 1 hour<br>2 minutes  | Up to 5 minute reduction   | Up to 20<br>minute<br>reduction | Up to 3<br>minute<br>reduction |
| South<br>Norwalk<br>to GCT     | 58 minutes<br>to<br>1 hour 11 minutes       | 54 minutes           | No Reduction               | Up to 4<br>minute<br>reduction  | Up to 4<br>minute<br>reduction |
| Danbury<br>to GCT              | 1 hour 52 minutes<br>to<br>2 hour 5 minutes | 1 hour<br>57 minutes | Up to 5 minute reduction   | Up to 24<br>minute<br>reduction | Up to 7<br>minute<br>reduction |

# **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

| You are invited to consider and on the alternatives being to improve passenger rail s the Danbury Branch. Comr also be accepted by mail c project website through Augus Mailing Address: Danbury Braco URS Corporation, 500 E Drive, Suite 3B, Rocky 06067. Project Website: h danburybranchstudy.com Pleaside of this form for additional | evaluated evaluated entry with the contents will r via the ti 6, 2010. anch EIS, enterprise Hill, CT ttp://www. | 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0         | ADDITIONAL COMMENTS  Please provide additional comments in the space below. Comments will be reviewed by the project team and will become part of the offical project record. |
|--|---|---|---|
|  | nagement  |   |   |
| Which alternative do you prefe   | er? (circle one) A B C  | D E   |   |
| When assessing the alternativ  | es, which criteria are most importa   | nt to you? (check up to 3)                      |   |
| Increased frequency  | Increased reliability   | Limited environmental impa                      |   |
| Decreased travel time  | TOD Potential   | Alleviated traffic congestion                   |   |
| Speed of completion  | Cost vs. Benefit  | Personal Impact of Alternat                     |   |
| Other(pleasespecify)   | 7.0   | A11 - 200 - 100                                 |   |
| When considering station sites   | s, what characteristics are most im   | portant to you? (check up to 3)Parking Location |   |
| Station Site Layout  | Station Location  | Existing Land Use                               |   |
| Cost   | Environmental Impacts   | TOD Potential                                   |   |
| Other(pleasespecify)   | X5 C  | .77 — 728                                       |   |
| 0  |   | U   | Thank you for your input!   |



# **DISCUSSION**

# **Questions/Comments?**

